



Newsrelease

City of Santa Clara



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Candidates Forum night before Election Day to discourage last-minute unfair campaigning

Candidates for municipal office in the City of Santa Clara will have a unique opportunity to deliver "The Final Word" to voters at a televised Candidates Forum on the night before the election. Instead of campaign promises or last-minute attacks on opponents, candidates in Santa Clara will discuss how well they fulfilled the promises they made to conduct honest, fair and respectful campaigns. The Final Word Forum will be broadcast live on Monday, Nov. 6, from 7-9:30 p.m. on Channel 15. The public is invited to attend the forum, which will be held in Santa Clara City Council Chambers.

Dr. Tom Shanks, consultant for the City's nonpartisan, nonpolitical Ethics Program, will moderate "The Final Word." He will select topics for discussion with assistance from the League of Women Voters and other neutral third parties who neither support nor oppose candidates.

The election-eve Final Word Forum is part of the City's "Vote Ethics" project, which asks voters to pay close attention to candidates' campaign conduct and to hold them accountable at the ballot box. The City's goal is to deepen the public's trust and confidence in its government.

At the forum, voters will have the opportunity to hear candidates discuss any mailers received in the final week before the election. Candidates and residents are invited to suggest other examples of campaign materials or strategies that raise issues of honesty, fairness and respect. These issues should be current in the last week of the campaign but may also include unresolved issues from any time during the campaign. Candidates and citizens are also invited to compliment candidates who conducted campaigns that may have been hard-hitting but were also fair and issues-oriented.

All issues and compliments must be submitted in writing and include available supporting documentation. They should be placed in a sealed envelope, addressed to Dr. Shanks, and delivered to the Santa Clara City Clerk's Office at 1500 Warburton Ave. no later than 12 noon on November 6, 2006. The name, U.S. Postal mailing address, and telephone number of the submitting party must also be included. Submitting parties may be contacted the afternoon of November 6 for additional information. No issues will be accepted the night of the event from candidates or residents who may be present, unless they are related to candidate materials which arrive in the mail on November 6.

The Final Word Forum was first held prior to the November 2004 Santa Clara elections. "We know that scheduling a forum on the night before the election encourages candidates to conduct honorable campaigns, so voters can make their decisions based on accurate information and relevant comparisons," said Dr. Shanks. "But if campaigns use ethically-questionable strategies, the other candidates will have a forum to set the record straight."

The "Vote Ethics" project is part of the City's ongoing Ethics Program, which has been underway since the adoption in 2000 of an updated City Code of Ethics and Values. During the past three elections, the City has held workshops for candidates, their campaign managers, and supporters to discuss ethical campaign strategies. This is the second year in a row that the program has taken the next step to include outreach to the voters themselves.

"We are not telling people who to vote for, but we are asking voters to study the campaign tactics used by candidates and to judge for themselves who is trustworthy and deserves the honor of representing the people," Dr. Shanks added.

On Election Day, voters in Santa Clara will select the Mayor and two Council Members. Voters will also consider a ballot measure on Binding Interest Arbitration for the police and fire unions. More information on the City of Santa Clara's ethics program can be found on the City's website: www.ci.santa-clara.ca.us or www.voteethics.org.